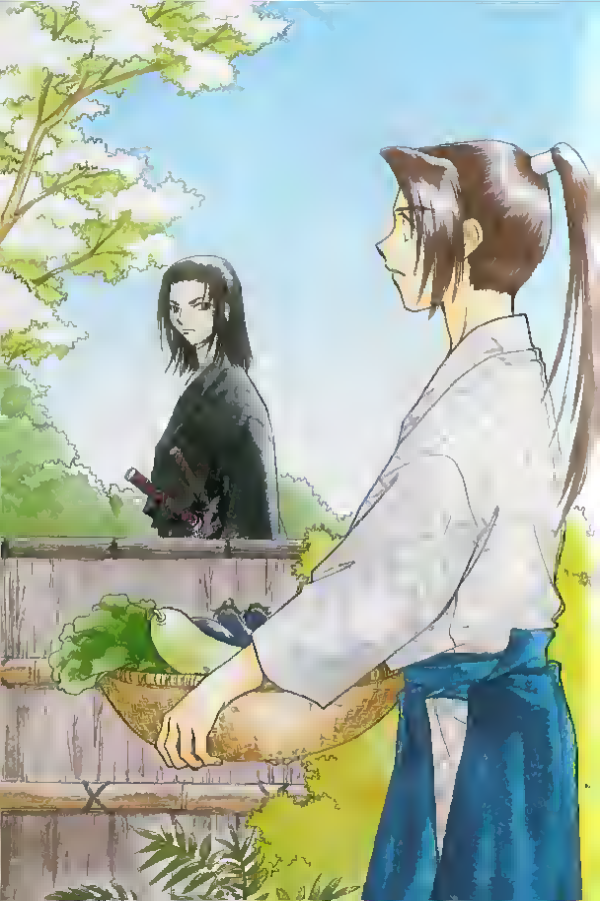

そして春の月

生嶋 美弥

MIYA◆IKUSHIMA

花音

そして春の月

生嶋 美弥

◆芳文社◆

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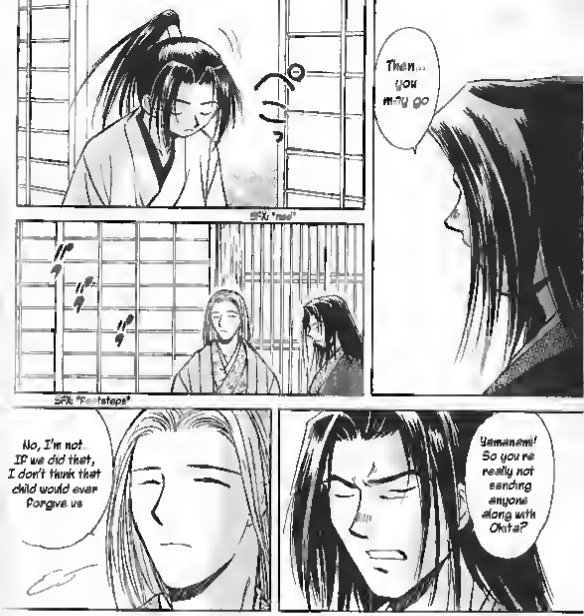
定価：

本体562円＋税

真っすぐな瞳をした少年・
沖田総司は、「試衛館」で
剣術修行中の身。
その沖田に果たし状が
届けられた!!
道場主・近藤勇の不安を
よそに平然としている
沖田を、土方歳三は
クールに見守っていたが…。
後に「新選組」隊士となる若き剣士達を
生嶋美弥が鮮烈に描く幕末青春ストーリー!!


SFX: "nod"
Then... you may go
SFX: "Footsteps"
No, I'm not... If we did that, I don't think that child would ever forgive us
Yamanami! So you're really not sending anyone along with Okita?

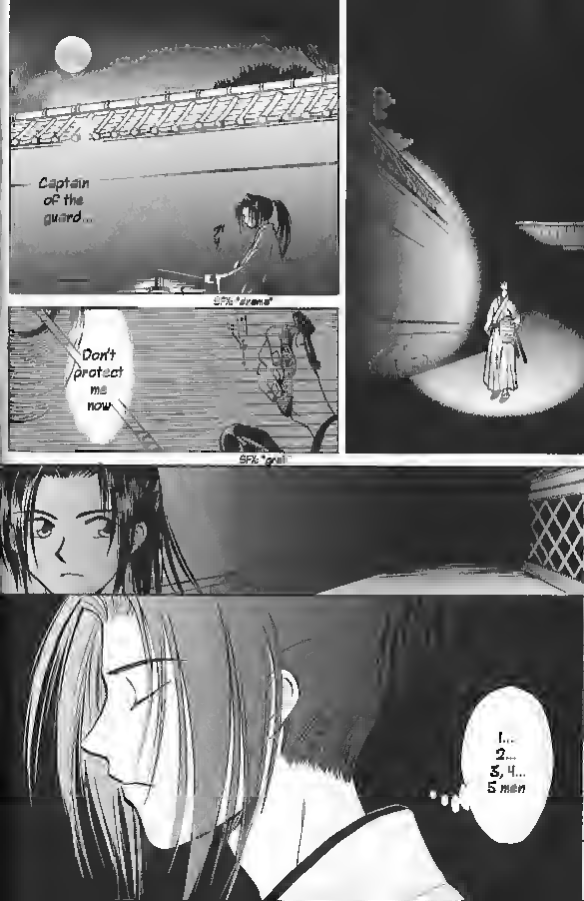
Damn it! I just don't understand...

It's not an attack... It's a killing blow...

If you don't have a sword, you can borrow mine
But why with real swords? Why not wooden swords?
This is really bothering me...
I can tell
None of your business
...Have you ever killed someone?
But why?

Yeah, well, it's all in the technique
Yet you haven't been killed
You expect me to confess to murder?
Don't be so mean, just tell me!!
Hmm...
Then don't you have any tips you could give me?
Something for when you're outnumbered...

Well, when you want to finish a fight as quickly and as easily as possible, you go for the commander. Don't do anything fancy
The commander?
Ah, so the haiku writing still isn't going well, huh?
Shut up...
So if that's all, get out of here I feel like being alone


Captain of the guard...
SFX: "drone"
Don't protect me now
SFX: "grit"
1...
2...
3, 4...
5 men

SFX: "rustle"
SFX: "movement"

SFX: "rustle"
SFX: "rustle"

Are all these men from the Hongou Morikawa dojo?
They must be...
I wonder if I can handle so many...
And the flying field really changed now...
Why in a back alley?
And they've all drawn their swords... Shouldn't we fight one-on-one?
Oh well, no time to worry now!
Let's go!!

SFX: assorted swishing and crashing

I'm going to be a samurai!

SFX: "surprise"
SFX: "cut"
SFX: "stagger"
スッ
SWOOSH!
WHI!!

SFX: "shaking with anger"
SFX: "Footsteps"

Hey...
Hijikata-san...
Hijikata-san...
It's those damned cats again

Eheke
!?
Come on
You look like hell

SFX: "splash"
Um...
Take off all your clothes
Fine, I'll help you
Why did you come to my place, anyway?

...Tch
Well... I can't show myself to Kaoru-san like this
I'm cold
SFX: "no"
SFX: "squeeze"
Hmm? I guess you're not made to kill
You can't just run around like that
You ought to wrap yourself up in a futon and get some rest

ぶしっ
SFX: "sure perfume"
What is it? You're a little cleaner now
Yeah
Um...

SFX: "fast movement"
SFX: "thud"
Ah
All that blood... but I don't think there's a scratch on you...

You must be a demon
That's mean, Hijikata-san!
Hm...
Ah!
I don't like the feeling of killing people, I only wanted to end it quickly...

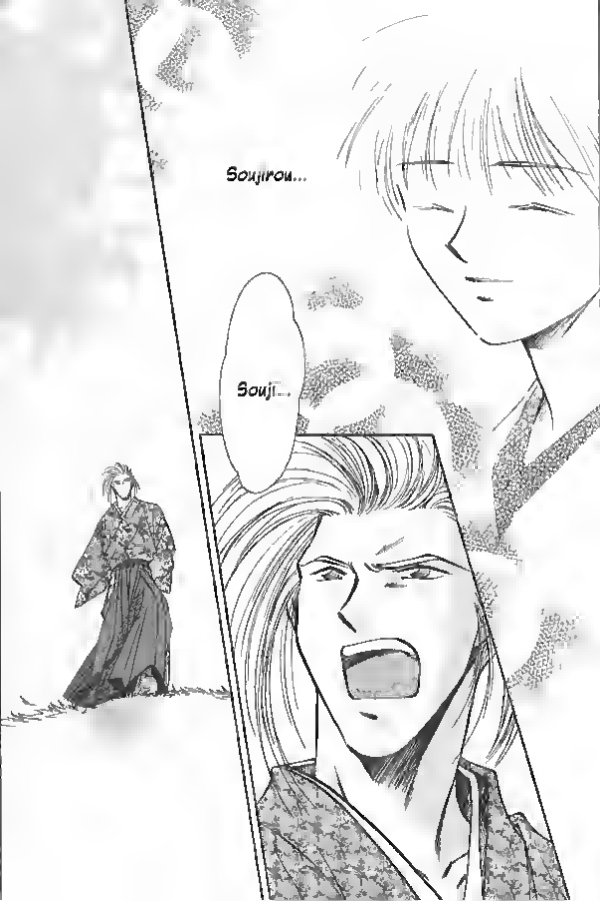
SFX: *rustling leaves*
Ah...

Souji!
I'll be captain of the guard, so I can protect you
Hey!

"splash splash"
Good morning!
Good morning
Oh, they say that last night, one Takeyama Sunrin of the Hongou Morikawa dojo was killed in a random attack
That's what they say?
That's what they say

Good morning!
Good morning
What is it? You're making a weird face
You... Last night, you...
Ah! So I wasn't dreaming!
WAH!
SFX: "shock"

This was before we had any idea of what the times would bring...
I don't know how we can keep the promises of those innocent days..
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
PERVERT!!
When these days, the heart beats faster at the smell of blood
THE END


Soujirou...
Souji...

Hijikata-san, you're so mean! I was having a nice dream
You bratty kid! Isami has been calling for you!
Hey, brat, get up!
That face.. What did you think I was dreaming about?
Why do I always get stuck with babysitting duty?
Hijikata-san! Please wait for me!

Ah, Kondou-san and Yamanami-san have returned!
Yes— I went, but I really didn't want to
Oh, you went to Hongou Morikawa's dojo the other day, right?
Oh, what a shame~
Am I right?
Even though you changed your mind after applying for the match, you still won
Well now, whose fault was that?

Such a shame, but there's going to be another fight
Yes, we'll enter you in the "rematch"
Each side gets to choose a participant, with someone acting as witness I've nominated you, Ohita
It will be a fight with real swords on the banks of the Odzu River
WHAT?!
Hey, wait! Don't I get a say in this?!
It's just a one on one match?
Oh no, I'm certain your opponent will not come alone
I don't think I under-stand..
Oh, I know you'll just crush him; I'm sure you'll win
This isn't just playing with wooden swords - someone could be killed
That's.. not good..
Oh yes, it's absolutely dreadful!

Do you know what you're saying?! If someone gets hurt, they could ruin our reputation!
I can see it now... "the Hongou Morikawa dojo has arrested Okita Souji of the Shieikan school"
Don't make me kill you...
But Kondou-san and Hijikata-san are better...
WHAT?! HEY!!
But this is something an old man can't do
So, will you accept?

Yes, I'll go alone
WHAT?!
Well, it's for the honor of our dojo, right? I'll go forth in the name of the Shieken dojo and I won't back down!
I'm going to win!
You're going now?!
It's 10 at night
Oh, well with your permission, of course!
You may have your evening meal, then go
Okay!

Okita!
Hmm...
Yes!
Yes?
Do you understand what this was really about?

KYAA!!
SFX "Plop"

Yamanami-san, you look like you'd make a good wife doing that!
Okay, I'll shut up now
SFX: "surprise"
Why didn't you let us all in on your little secret before? Isn't this rather serious?
Well, I was down in the red light district...
that son of a bitch is so full of himself
So, Hijikata-san, when did you get a prostitute pregnant?
That's NOT what I'm saying, Harada!!

But at the morning bell, they drive everyone out of the pleasure quarters
Since we don't know what to do with it, let's give it back
Well, the prostitutes are probably awake down in the brothels
...come on, let's take a bite.
But none of that tells us who this child belongs to!
So you brought him back here

こまっ
You might think I'm being rash, but this child has to be returned
SFX: "flop"
Goo!
That kid? He was found under the bridge*!
*euphemism for unwanted child
SFX: "rustle"
ガサ
ゴソ

GAH! Why is it touching me?!
SFX: "pull"
SFX: "Pinna"
Quit it!! If you want to stay here, then you have to behave like an adult!
Hijikata-san!! What you're saying doesn't make sense!
SFX: "grab"
SFX: "crying"
You can't treat a baby that way!

ぐったり
What?
Look what you did!
You dislocated his shoulder!
WHAT?!

It works on bones too!
Uh, isn't Ishida Sanyaku something you drink?
I could fix that right up with a sprinkle of Ishida Sanyaku! It's an old family medicine
What did you say?!
We've never heard such nonsense! We'll have Doctor Ryoujun see him
Um, then I had better call him...
Um, I...
You're best, Okita-kun, so you should go. Everyone else can wait here
Ah...

Toshi-san!
You... don't know where to return that child, do you?

I found him with his parents
Hmm?
So what was it?
SFX: *shake*
The child's clothes were silk... although there was blood at the hem, they seemed new
They weren't samurai
They didn't look like they were from around there
But this all must have a reason
I don't know why
Whatever the situation, this child was fated to be born
I'd want to return him to his family

What's with all this dramatic crap?!
Toshi-san, where do you think that child's destiny lies?
People have something that can be called destiny... one can't go against natural fate
I know you don't believe in Fate, but keep an open mind
We all want to believe that...
I'd like to think that the Future can change

Heaven's
Child

What's he saying shit like that for? That's more like something Yamanami would say
We all want to believe that...
Don't say things like that about Kondou-san!
You're such a brown-noser
I don't associate myself with drunks!
Good night!

Mm...
SFX: "Gasp" and "surprise"
Hijikata-san!!

Hm...
Since when do you think you can just squash me?!
I'm sorry I make you so uncomfortable
Too much for you?
If that's all I am to you..

But I'll only hit them with the back of my sword!
Yes, sir!
Souji! Don't hesitate! We have good reason!
Whatever you have to do

SFX: Whoosh
SFX: Whoosh
SFX: Whoosh

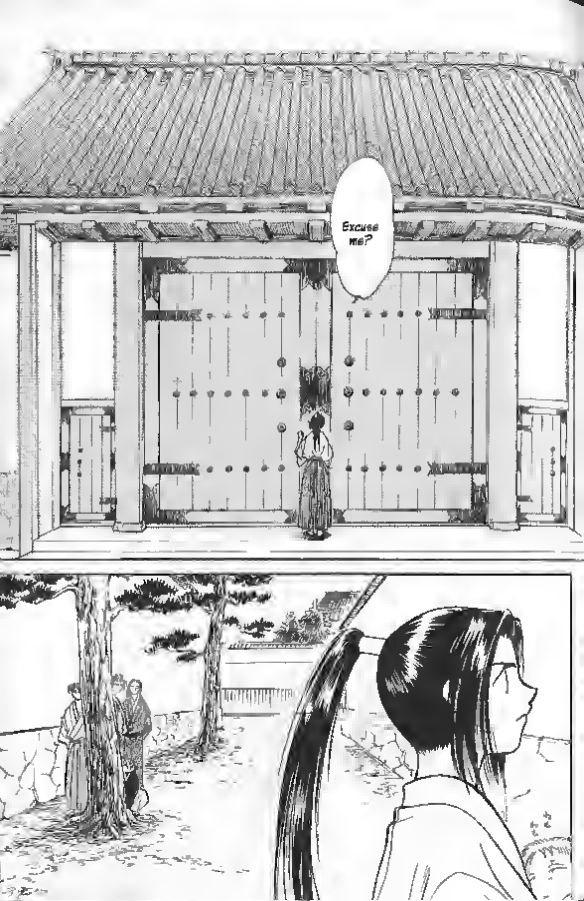
Uwaah!!
SFX. "pull"
SFX. "thump"
Even that nervous guy pulled out his sword!

SFX: "sh"
Toudou-kun! Use the back of your sword!
Right!
That's it!!
It's not like we wanted to get involved in this

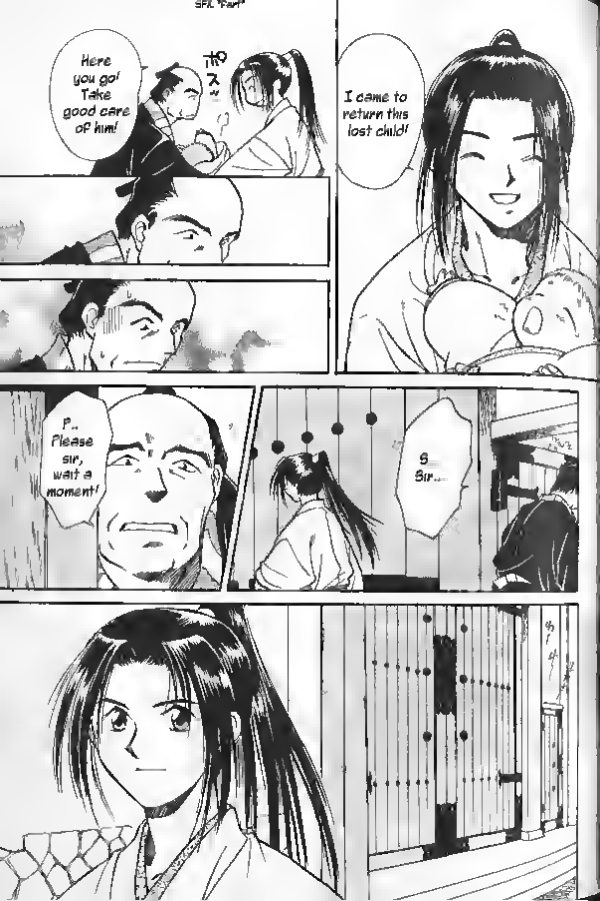
You could almost say the kid just dropped from heaven!!
Should we call the guards?
Let's just tell them it was an attempted burglary

What a beautiful moon...
It's so bright...

SFX: "knock"
ドン ドン
Um, excuse me?
But there's nothing worth taking from a run-down dojo
Ah, you caught my lie. Well, let's see you come up with something better
Ah, well...


Excuse me?

Oh, yeah
Oh come on, if it were Hijikata-san, they'd think he was going to kill them before they had a chance to protest!
But it was Tokizou who found it, so why is Souji...?
Could have sent Yamanami-san, then
Hey, it opened!
It's only you that makes me uneasy
Unless your feelings have changed, Ma'am

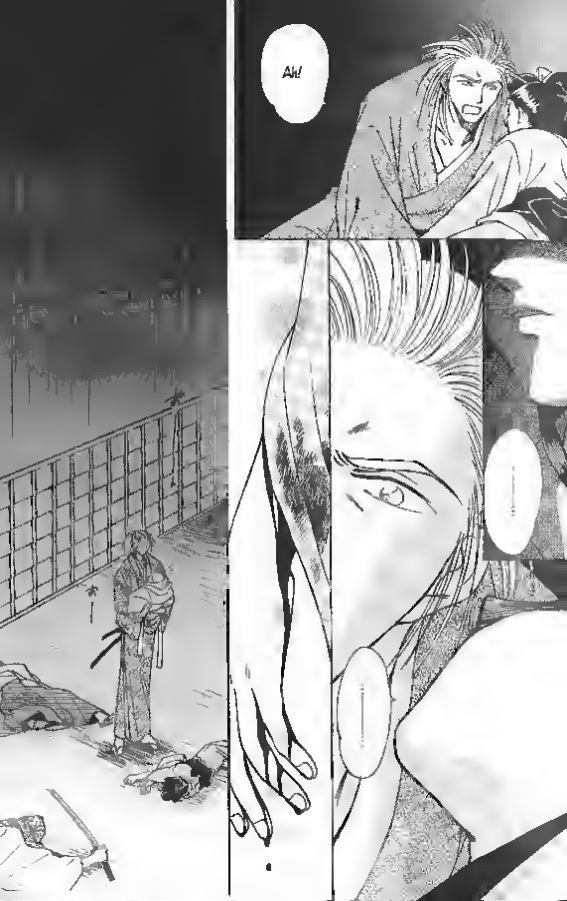

Here you go! Take good care of him!
I came to return this lost child!
P... Please sir, wait a moment!
S... Sir...

Take care!!
Hijiketa-san. Just thank goodness that's taken care of!!
Will it always be this way for us?
Well, I guess no one can argue with that
Hey!
Who said that?!
THE END

I'm pathetic
.....
I was thinking of how to get a haiku out of it
SFX "drama"
Kyaa!!!
What?

Ah!
Stop right there!
SFX "gah"
SFX "surrrsh"
SFX "crying"

Shit... Of all the thing I don't need t deal with
Hey! Stop!
Huh?
Hey!
You still alive?


Ah!

SFX: Footsteps
SFX: Footsteps
SFX: Footsteps

Hmm...
Ah, good morning Toudou-kun!
SFX: "baby noises"
The sound is coming from in there...
"Good" morning?!
It's too damned early to be awake!
Can't you keep it down, Toshizou?!
Toudou-kun?!
SFX: "break"
Hey Toshizou, you had better let Souji see what you've been up to!
SFX: "grip"
TWIST
SFX: "ugh"

He went out, said he wanted to be alone I only said we should have lunch together ' cause he looked so sad
How is Okita?
Ah, well you just get happy when somebody feeds you
What?! Nobody's that easy!
Even so What got Isami so mad?
Uhh What?!
And you, Toshizou when you should have stood up For a Friend
SFX. 'surprise'

Hey, let's see if your head makes an empty sound when I shake it!
WA AA AA
SFX: "shake"
Damn it... That Okita can really piss me off...
Aww, you know you can't stay mad at him

Anger is like the wind, there is a time when it must subside
Shut up
SFX. "roll over"
I wonder if it was a mistake to make a special case of him and appoint him assistant instructor
And all you said to him was "Think about it"
Sure I can

Perhaps he would be a better student if you were a better teacher
Kiss
WAH!
SHUT U-
You've developed a bad habit of being a stubborn grouch
But there's no point in me just telling you
You've got earwax... let's take care of you~
.....

Soujirou
Soujirou...

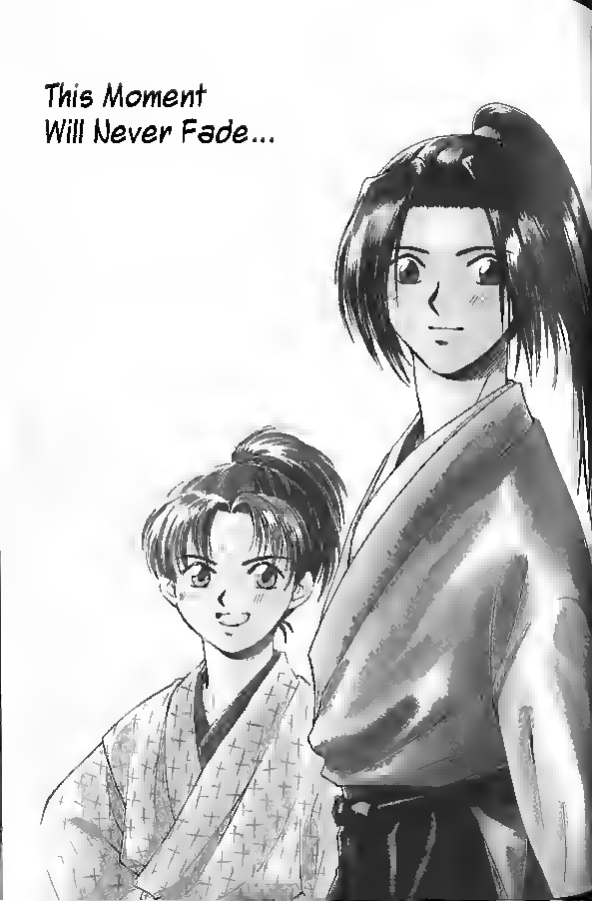
What's wrong, Soujirou?
You're not your cheerful self— Were you scolded?
You know me too well, Kikuchiyo

Of course, you're the person I love. I know you're only unhappy when you get yelled at
You never scold me, Kikuchiyo
Kiku...
Be happy!

Hey
Hm?

What the hell are you talking about? You trying to piss me off, brat?
Hijikata-san! You can't just stand there!! Kikuchiyo must have gone because of you!
Can't you keep your whining to yourself so it doesn't annoy me?
But you'd better not be so damned bratty and innocent with him
Isami wanted to see you
Fine, whatever. Did you have some kind of business with me?
Hey! Don't pull the cute act on me!
"surprise"

Wah!
Well if you can't take that, take this!
I'm not going to take this from you!
SFX: *swish*
How about we spar?
Why are you giving me a wooden sword?
That's if you're up to it, of course
I am!

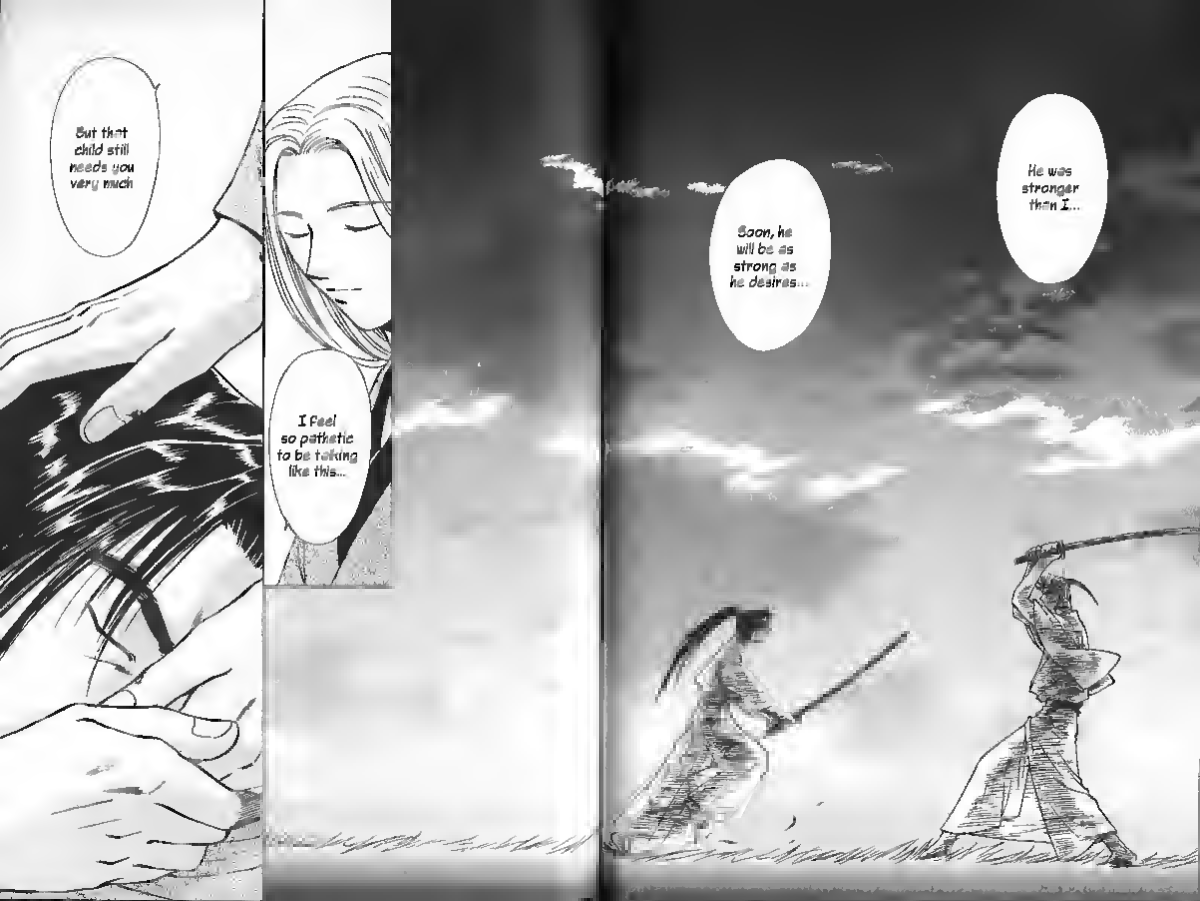

This Moment
Will Never Fade...

Oh really?
I'll show you what it means to be serious!
This isn't like you I'm telling you to stop for your own good! I only care about winning!
I'm not playing around
Are you saying I should just give up?! I finish what I start!

Like this!
So as not to dishonor me, he lost on purpose
I know, dear

Oh, I don't know about that
But he totally fooled everyone else
Perhaps his sword faltered because he was lost in thought
He hesitated because he didn't care about winning...
If he can't do that, he'll be killed in a real battle
I'm sure Hijikata knows too

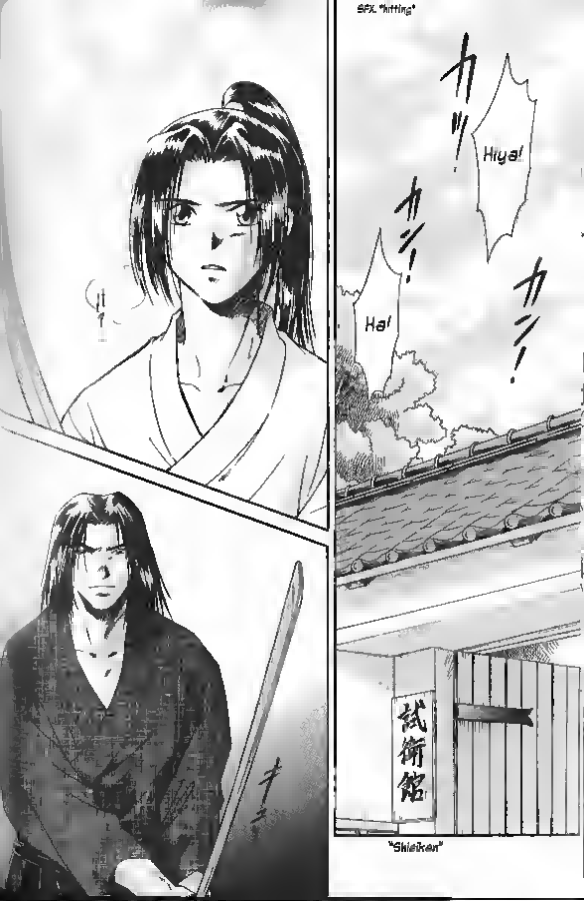
When I first met him, I couldn't help but notice his fighting spirit
I'd knock him down again and again
But he would always get up with fire in his eyes
I wish that Okita would return


But that child still needs you very much
I feel so pathetic to be talking like this...
Soon, he will be as strong as he desires...
He was stronger than I...

How is this...
I can barely follow his movements!
But... but why is he fighting like this?!
I know Hijikata-san's sword technique
...fun?!
!!

Hiji-kata-san!!
I'm scared!
Hi
san Please stop
Hiji-kata
Hiji
BRK *slash*

You were defeated by your own will
Chii
SFX: "clanking"
I... I thought you were going to kill me
My very spirit terrified you... You flinched from me


SFX: "hitting"
カン!
Hiya!
カン!
カン!
Ha!
カン!
試衛館
"Shieikan"

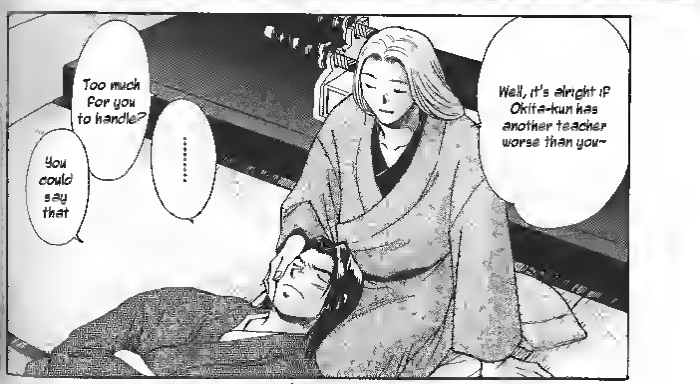
People like that just get killed
Ah...
You put on such an act, I wondered if you could really kill someone
These days, you only think of how to hide yourself and play the game
Your true nature can't be held back
If it hadn't been me...
Kondou-san...
Yet I know you surpass genius.. even Isami

I'm perfectly able to defend myself!
If you died... no, that's something I would never let happen
No... You won't be killed

Mm...
But the winner can make the loser do whatever he wants
What are you doing?! We can't do this here!
No way! That's cheating!!

You just don't have the balls... You're weak~~
Wh... What?
Ah... Um...
Haha, I knew it
You're the kind of guy...
Who isn't worth the trouble!!

Let's do it again! This time I won't lose!
Eh, I don't feel like it
But I'm telling you, I'm a lot better!


Well, it's alright if Okita-kun has another teacher worse than you~
.....
Too much for you to handle?
You could say that

THE END

Ha!

Yeah, I know, but lately...
So who do you think is stronger?
Whoa, Heisuke! Uh... uh... I guess Kondou-san?
You get what I'm saying?
You have no tact
Yeah, I bet he's just good enough to block
It's kind of sad that Tennen Rishin Ryuu is coming to that...
Don't let Hijikata-san hear you!

SFX "action something"

Thank you very much!
SFX. "awnlar"
SFX. "thou"

SFX: "sudden impact"

Souji!
Hey!
Well, why?!
What the hell did you do that for, Isami?!
FX: "quick movement"
Hey! Damn him,
I've got to hold you back

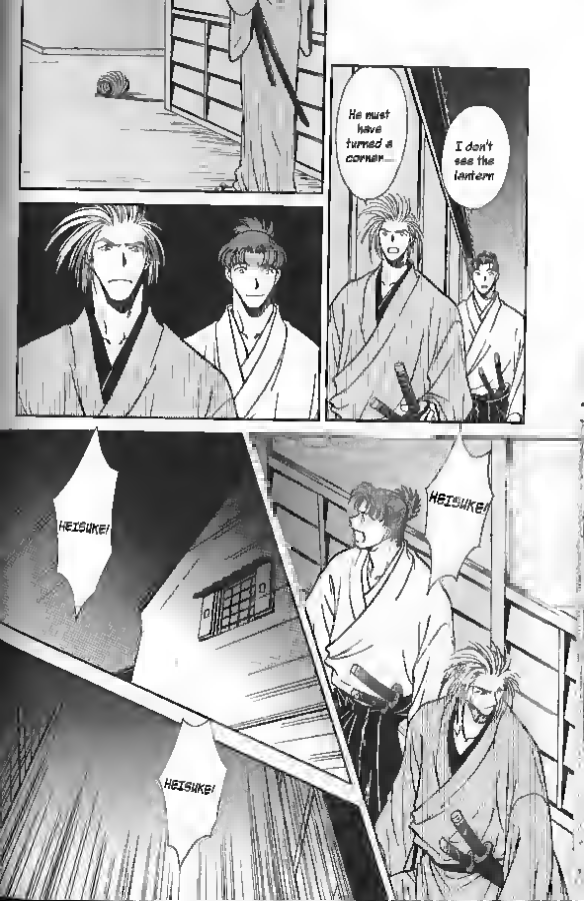
That Isami is a real jerk!
Kondou-san...
Hey! Lemme go!
Just think about it
ダッ
ダッ
ダッ

Now get down there and try to walk like ladies
Yes sir
No way in hell
SFX: "grab"
WAH! Hey!
Oof!
Souji!
Owww.
SFX: "thu"

There's no way I can do it...
I'm sorry...
So he's all we've got...
For now, we have no choice.
Yeah, well it had better be a dark night...
Go with Hijikata and Harada and see what you can find out

It's too dark to see...
We'd better not lose the light of that lantern
Can he really lure them in that way?
Fucking Souji...
I should have fallen too!!

Man...
Yeah, but what was I supposed to say to Isami?!
Maybe it wasn't what I thought.
SFX. "impact"


He must have turned a corner...
I don't see the lantern
HEISUKE!
HEISUKE!
HEISUKE!

SFX: *dramatic effect*
SFX: *breathing hard*

SFX: *grab*

HARADA!
SFX: "mm"

They're getting away! Aren't you coming?
You're just standing there! Let's get them!
SFX: "pump"

It was dark, so we only got one
We've already stolen three girls, so people are being really careful at night
We need two, maybe three more
Our Foreign Friends are sick of those sluts
And the landlady says they're always underfoot
So you're selling girls to Foreigners, huh? How pathetic
Shut up! You'd better worry about yourself!
So what do we do with this bitch?
Finish it up; get some money out of selling her
HEY! You talk big, but you ain't gonna be selling ME!

Whatever would make you think such a thing~?
SFX "Impact"
Are you trying to make fun of us?!
Fuck you, bitch, we'll do what we want!
My friends are coming and they're gonna kill you
We love dumbasses like you guys
You'd better beheve me
I oughta slap you for that bullshit Your little friends ain't coming

The Sleeping Lion's
Children

You really should shut the hell up, bitch
KYAA!
Bastards!
SFX: *sudden impact*
If you don't shut up, we'll do it for you
Damn it, don't you bastards fuck with me...
Spread her legs and hold her down
Ooh, is it a woman or a man~? We'll have to be gentle~
SFX: *surprise*

You Fucking bastards!
LET ME GO!
Fuck!
Hey now, we're being real gentle-

Heisuke...
You're one of those, huh?
Hey, there are some weird ones even among foreigners who prefer other men to women
If you've finished your exercises, we can go to my room
Yes sir!
It's weird to us, but
I guess we seem pretty weird to your kind, too
Come on baby, show us some love!
Please, stop!
I'll be gentle with you, Heisuke
Damn those bastards
PLEASE, NO!
If I only had a sword

!
Ah...
You've got to try this, he's nice and tight
WAH!
UWAH!

Damn you!
SFX. "move slowly."
SFX. "hard breathing."
You wanna die that bad? We can tear you apart...
Heh, you're stronger than we thought, bitch

Heh, with my skills, you're all dead!
You talk big for a little guy~
SHUT UP!
SFX: "emotional movement"
SFX: "running through grass"
You make me sick...

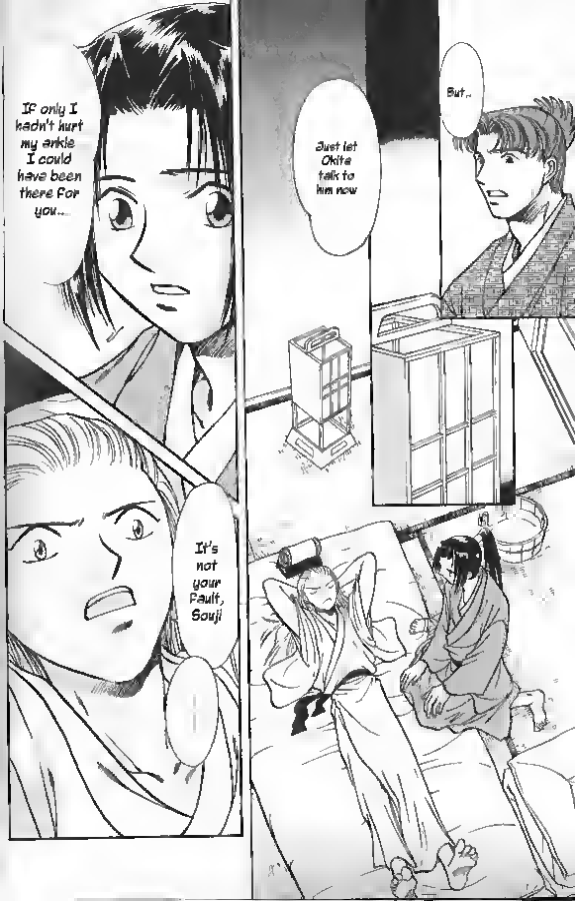
ウオーン!!
SFX: "creak"
official business!
official business!
official business!
SFX: "tension"
TOUDOU!!

SFX: "Whoa"
SFX: "AAAH!"
SFX: "sigh"
Thank goodness you're alright!
Hey! Are you hurt?!
I
I
T...odou!?

DON'T TOUCH ME!!
What's wrong?
Huh?

No doubt this coincided with the magistrate's plans
He simply need us to carry them out
But what choice did we have?
That... That's shame-ful
I'll go apologise to Hereuka
Not tonight
We we utterly useless
We...
I'll tomorrow and return the reward

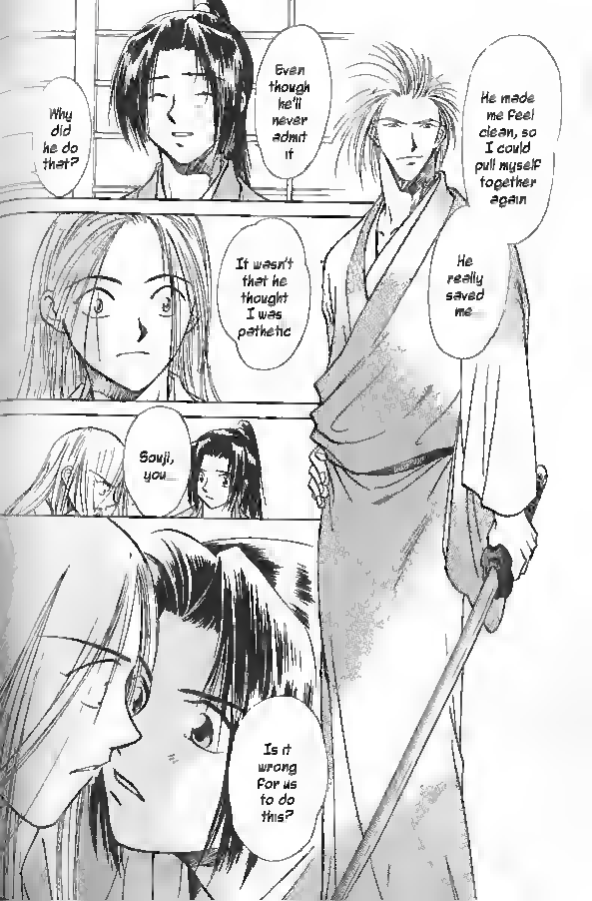
SFX: "Footsteps"
Um...


But..
Just let Okita talk to him now
If only I hadn't hurt my ankle I could have been there for you...
It's not your fault, Souji

I went to get bigger
Huh?
You wouldn't get it
I went to get bigger, and stronger
It's got to be wrong for the strong ones to force themselves on the weak
Are you angry with me because of Hijikata?
Aren't all men alike, in the end?
The stong ones just do whatever they want to the weaker ones
That's not true!
They're not all like that, Toudou-kun!!
Pressing you down with all their strength... Fuck..

I know it was a terrible night, but not everyone is like that!!
Hijikata-san isn't!!
I don't know...
I just don't know...
SFX: "gu"
Nn?...

What the hell are you doing?!
When you look so sad, I can't help it!!
Please cheer up...
Get the hell away from me!!
Fuck it if I look pathetic to you! I was just STUPID to think this would all work out!
When I didn't know what to do
That was the first time Hijikata-san held me
SFX: "surprise"


Why did he do that?
Even though he'll never admit it
He made me feel clean, so I could pull myself together again
It wasn't that he thought I was pathetic
He really saved me...
Souji, you...
Is it wrong for us to do this?

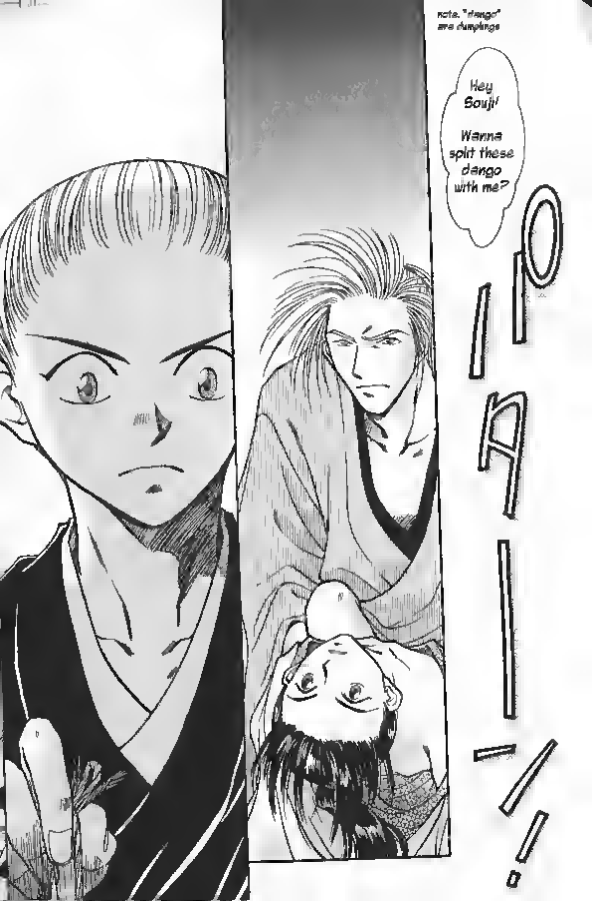
You know, there are some things I haven't even said to Hyikata-san
?
Just tell me if you don't like it, okay?
Like... why it is I sleep with him
Huh?
Uh..

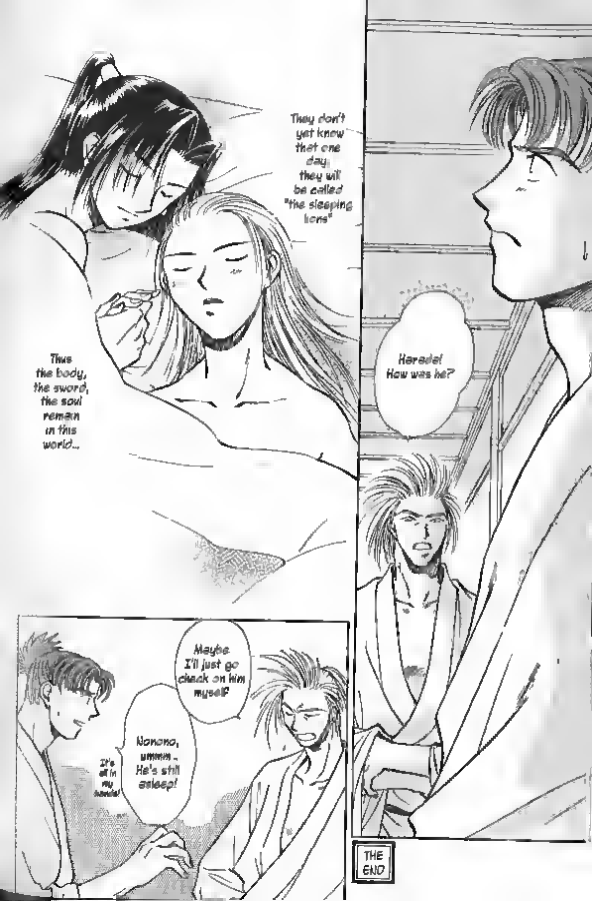
Because it feels good~
Now that's our secret! Don't tell him!!
HAHAHAHA You're awful!
You little...
Man, he'd be sooo pissed... You can trust me!

Great!
REK: *birds singing*

Good morning, Toudou!
Okay it ought to be easy to apologise to him before he eats..
SFX. "door opening"
SFX. "rustle"
Hey!
Un ,
Ugh Just let me sleep a little more ..

073. "door slamming"


note. "dango" are dumplings
Hey Souji!
Wanna split these dango with me?
POI!!!


They don't yet know that one day they will be called "the sleeping lions"
Thus the body, the sword, the soul remain in this world...
Haradel! How was he?
Maybe I'll just go check on him myself
Nonono, ummm.. He's still asleep!
It's all in my hands!
THE END

Toudou-kun!!
SFX: "run away"
Toudou-kun...
SFX: "shake"

Well then..
SFX: "run away"
ISAMI!!
Kondou?
Open up!
SFX: "plop"
SIT DOWN!
S...S... But... Okita and Hijikata were...
Souji or... Tesshi...?
Won't you calm down?!
Oh, you have a visitor! Well, we wouldn't want to interrupt...

Kanbei-dono, if I might presume to ask... I'd like you to apprehend the kidnapper
You must be quite embaressed to have such a hapeless pupil as this Toudou Heisuke
Oh no, no...
Shouldn't you notify the magistrate's office?
Well, of course we did, but...
I see...
We have no idea who is to blame
No Power then. 3 girls of marriageable age have been abducted in this area
The young women are in danger
Even if you cannot catch the criminal, if you could provide a bodyguard for my daughter
And if you should find the man responsible and capture him...

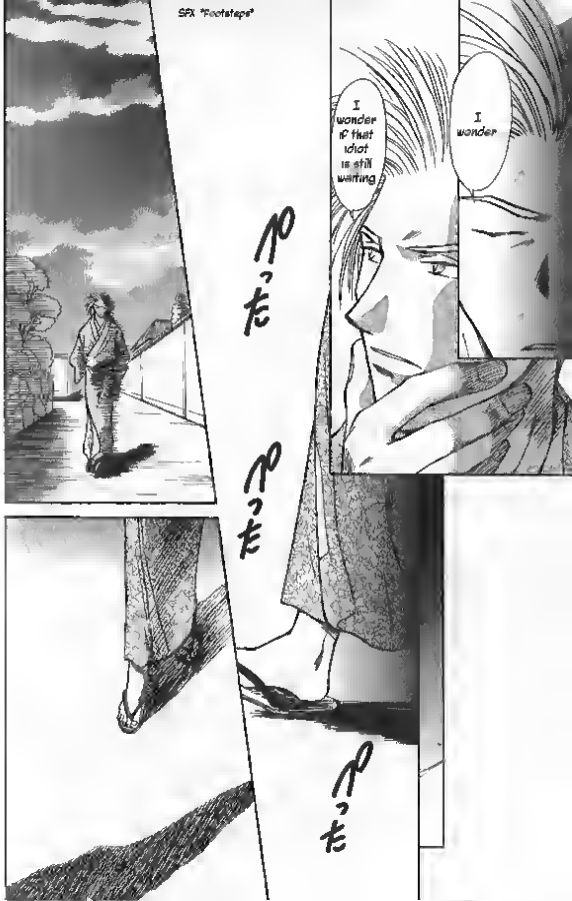
I understand
Shall we borrow a kimono and dress this one in it?
WTF?!
HUH? ME?
WHAT IS HE SAYING?
dress me in WHAT?!
Well, that settles it!
Don't tell me that the best thing we can do to help those girls is to dress me up and let me walk the streets!
Thank you very much! Please do your best!
TOU-DOU...
RIGHT!
You can count on me!

Well OBVIOUSLY you're the only ones who could get away with a borrowed kimono!
Why are we the ones stuck with this?!
SFX: "kettle cry"
I didn't mislead anyone
Fuck you! You tricked us!!
You will do it out of the kindness of your heart

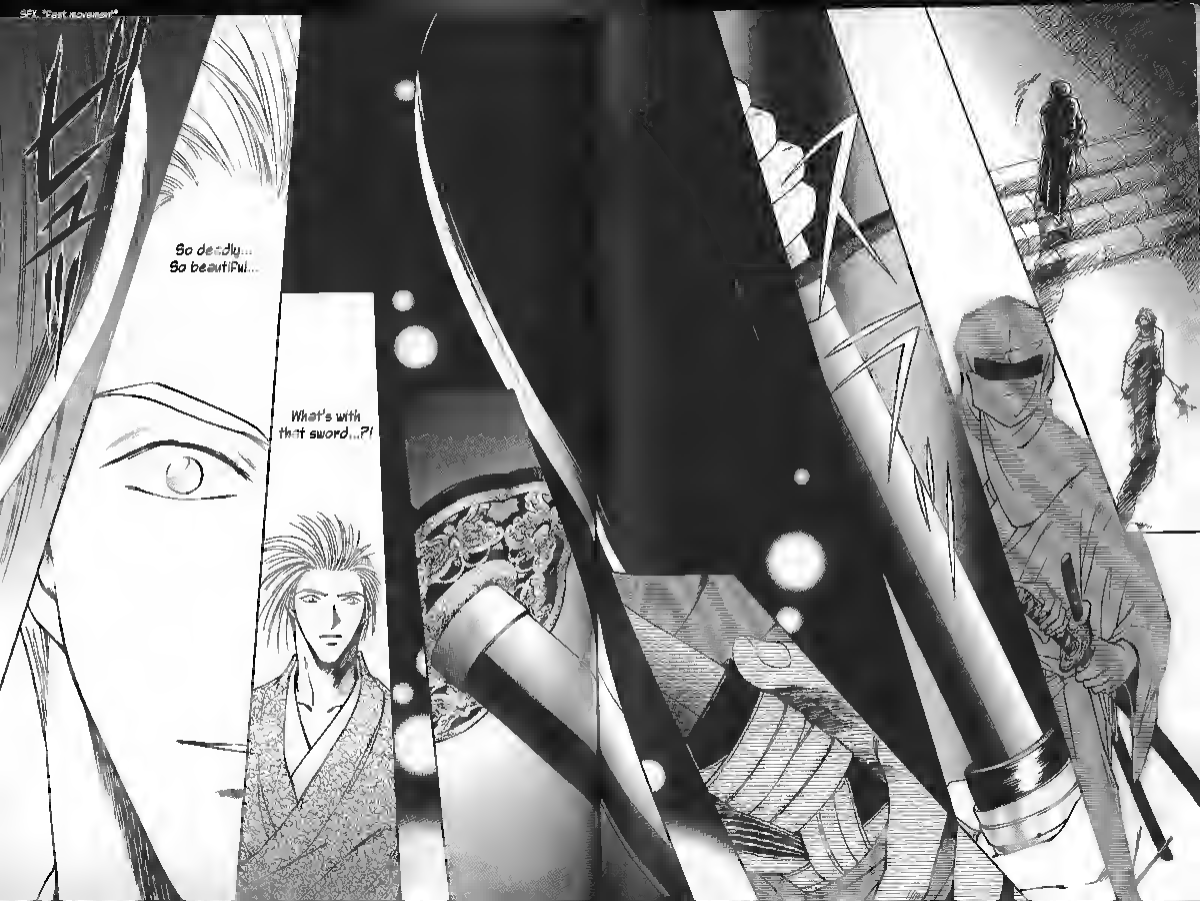
Kindness my ass! There had better be a serious reward!
Yeah, Isami
How much?
There is, right?
You students owe us teachers a monthly fee for all that food you eat!
SHUT UP!!!

We were all children once, you know
Impin!
SFX: "bells"
He didn't come after all...
Ah... The nanatsu kan bell...

The sunset...
The sunset's glow...
THAT WAS CRAP!
All those poetic words fuck up the rythm!!
The face of a girl waiting in the sunset's glow comes to mind, then disappears


SFX: "Footsteps"
I wonder
I wonder if that idiot is still waiting
ぺったぺったぺった

So you just walk about unarmed in times like these...
What, you want a fight with me?
You ought to take the opportunity to run away...
It's either that, or you're that murderer everyone's talking about


SFX. "Fast movement"
So deadly...
So beautiful...
What's with that sword...?!

SFX: *energetic movement*
Hah!!
Herada-san and Tendou-kun didn't even come... I'm so bored...
Hey, you're still here
Hijikata-san!! What are you doing here?!

SFX: "door slamming"

Hijikata-san!
SFX: "impact"

Hijikata-san, what are you doing?!
I thought you were going to keep me waiting forever
Don't speak

Of course I'd come for you

SFX: "sniff"

SFX: "sniff"
That hurts
Ouw...
You need medical attention!

It's no big deal
Hyikata-san I smell blood...

Hijikata-san!!
I said it's no big deal!
On the way here, I ran into the murderer. It must have been his intention from the start to let me escape
I was able to see his sword...
Huh?
I've never seen a sword like that...
It's like it sucked out my soul
That's...
It really exists... in all the world such an uncanny sword...

From the great swordsmith Sengo Muramasa came a blade called "Kochoumaru Kage" the "Butterfly Shadow"

In essence, it was as if the sword and its shadow created a double strike. With skill the shadow strike may kill without an actual hit

The Kochoumaru is so sharp, so deadly that it's said even an amateur can fight with true grace, and so it has become highly prized

Your wound needs attention!
Don't joke around at a time like this!
If you had seen it too...
The smell of blood... doesn't it make you a little excited?
No, that's just you

The first time I held you, you smelled of blood
Ah...

Did you want to go to a teahouse?
You dragged me to the games and I bought you sweets. What are you sulking for?
What am I supposed to say - Yeah, I ran into the guy, then ran like a wimp?
So what?!
It's because you didn't tell the police about the murderer!
Don't make such a big deal about it.

People have to know about that guy but all I can think about is the sword...
Whatever

Don't you know it could be a clue in finding that criminal!

SENSEI!!

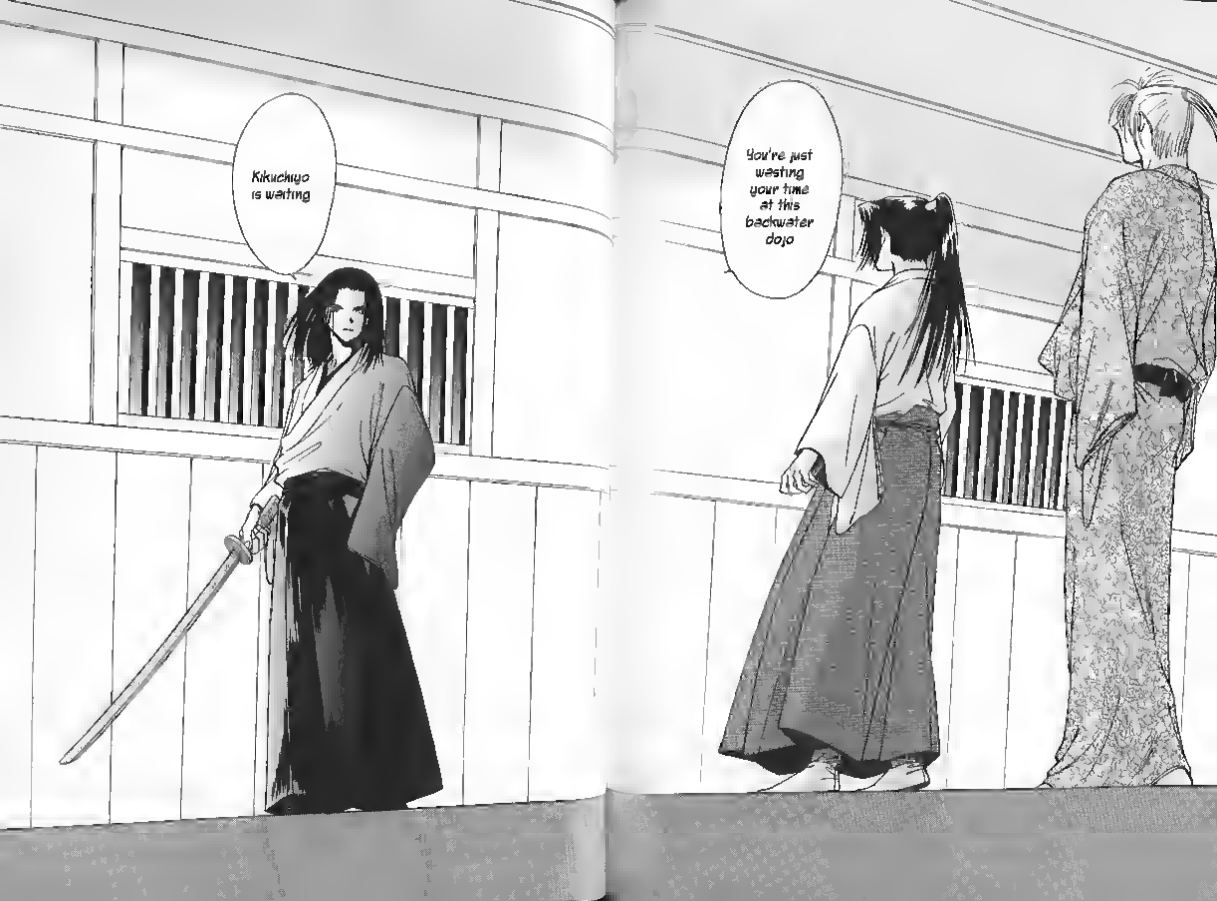
Thank goodness, Hijikata-sensei and Okita-sensei!

It's horrible... It's that guy who's been challenging dojo...
SFX. "Fast"
Well now, this doesn't seem right so I'll let you go
You may think that, but it will only bring you unneeded shame
That won't do - as the master of this dojo... your fight is with me
SFX. "Fast"

Kondou-san!!
Ah...

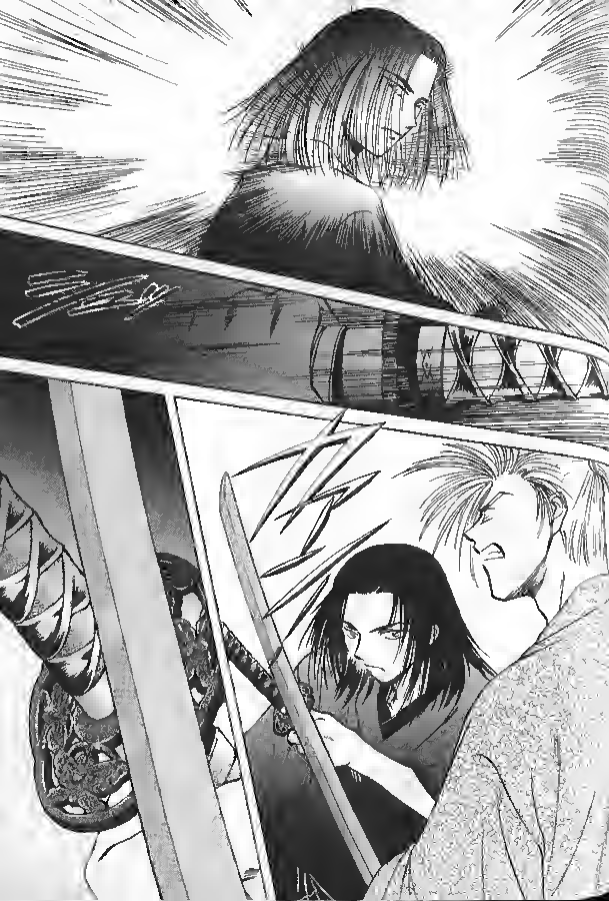
I've found you...

I am called Saitou Hajime
At last, I've found you Boujirou


Kikuchiyo is waiting
You're just wasting your time at this backwater dojo

スラッ
Our lord has chosen to bestow this upon you, so accept it with care
This Kochoumaru Kage is the masterpiece of the True Muramasas...
カチ
SFX: "sniff"
Isn't it somewhat impolite to unsheath it in our presence?
SFX: "clink"
カチッ
ヤバ

How how do you know that?!
My business here is done. Excuse me
Don't fuck with us!!
Hijikata-san!!



That sword...
It's him!!
終

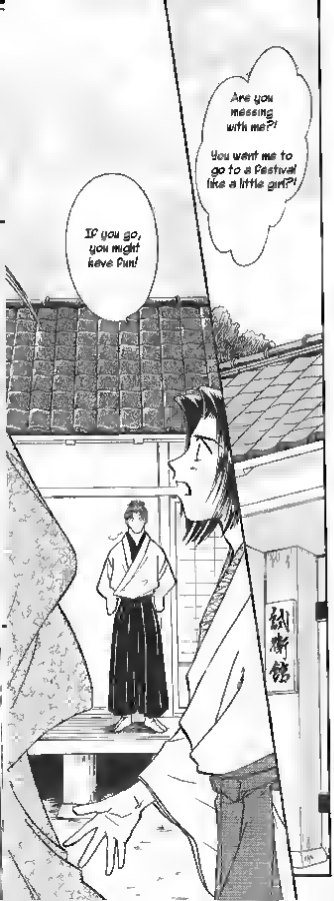
Shady Footsteps

Part One

There must be a festival today
Why don't we invite Toudou-kun?
Uhh...
Well then, I guess I'll just have to invite Hijikata-san
I guess so...
Uh, really?
Aww, but he's still fun
Not that guy... he's got absolutely no charm

What kind of reaction is that?!
I guess I'm just not as much fun as Keisuke
Umm...
So, mahow I don't think he'd enjoy it as much, though
HUH?!
SFX: "uproar noise"
Shut up, you idiots! We don't know if it really is a serial killer yet!
I thought we caught the kidnapper - now what?
Someone who kills passers-by just to test his sword!?
What dangerous times we live in...
This has to be a bad omen on a day like this...

Can you see?
Yeah, I see it
What a deep cut... It's all the way to the bone!
namu namu (buddhist chant)
I wonder if it was a good sword, or a good swordsman
shssssh...
Random violence is just one of the problems these days...
You know the rumor about that one dojo? They're one of the most famous schools in Edo, but people say an instructor runs the place with an iron fist
Well, I don't know the whole story 'cause I guess that's not something they want getting out but yesterday, while I was practicing my spear over there
It was a spear training school?
I wonder... if there's a connection
Hmm? To what?
Wait, we were practicing how to fight off a spear with a bamboo sword! that kind of stuff!
A guy came around with a sign saying he'd fight anyone, but that guy running the place made him get rid of it. He was all pissy about it too


Are you messing with me?!
You want me to go to a festival like a little girl?!
If you go, you might have fun!
剣術館

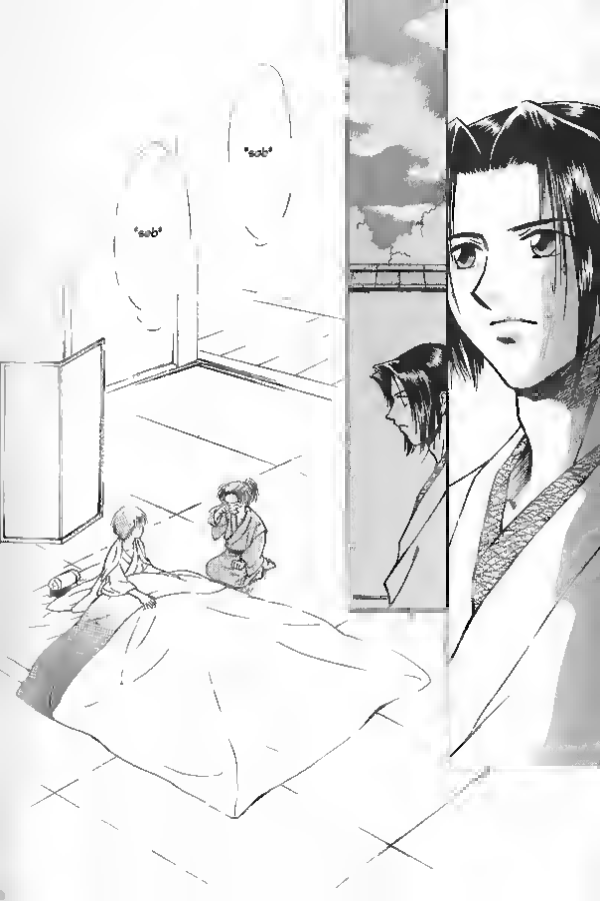
I mean... what if some guy came to challenge us?
Akeha

Well unlike you, I'm probably wouldn't go hanging around other dojo that aren't even of the same school

Yeah, I guess so...

Meet me in front of the shrine at nanatsu han (about 5:00 PM on the old clock)
I'm giving private lessons later today so I'll be going to the shrine instead of coming back here
Why don't you come?
There is NO WAY IN HELL I'm going
HARADA! What are you doing?
Standing around being useless?!
SFX. "grrr"
Damn it, he's gotten so demanding lately...

Nah, not really
What's all this racket?!
SFX: "door opening"
Huh? I thought you and Okita were both giving private lessons today
Ah I trust Okita to cover them
I think I'll go hang out with Heisuke...
I'm not sure if I like this idea of someone challenging the dojo
Oh...well we were just saying they wouldn't do it anyway
What was that?
Ah... nothing!
Tosin I see you're not busy
Why don't you go have some fun with Okita?
I'm not some rotten brat anymore


sob
sob

Don't cry Soujirou
But... But they...
Thank you
Soujirou...

I bet he's moody...
When he's in a rotten mood, he sits by himself and writes crappy poetry
Trying to squeeze your way in?
It's kind of a rule around Shukan Dojo - when Hijikata is in a bad mood, you'd better not touch him or you'll feel his wrath
Huh? How is that?
Oh well if Hijikata is busy Yamanami will take care of him
So they call him "Saitou"? That guy was so cool yesterday
Well yeah... but it's just Yamanami...
He's kind of overbearing, isn't he?

Whoa, Yamanami, it's not like you to appear like that!
Oh, I'm always around
Please try to set a good example for the students and don't play around in a place like this
Heke...
WAA!!
What about me?
It's finally quiet...

Hmm...
It's got to be a residential area near the shrine, without a lot of traffic from Higashi-kawa...
And with the sun going down... the guy who attacked me could have taken shelter in some neighboring gate.
But then why attack me in the first place?
"Plop"

And what about Souji...?
What if he's like, possessed by that sword?
If the guy going around doing looking for Souji is the killer...
This is driving me crazy
SFX: "roll over"

SFX: *sneak*
Not at all!
It's bad of me to ask your help...
Hyikata-san! Dinner is ready!
I don't want any
It's getting late, where are you going?

Hijikata-san!!
Please wait!!
Leave me alone
At least I've got "something"
And what the hell do you think you're doing with those swords?
The killer isn't going to approach if I've got a guy carrying swords right next to me! Go away!

You could have been killed yesterday!
I screwed up, okay?
We'll see
You say you're going totally unarmed...
If you really mean that...
What do you intend to do?
You just want to see that Saitou guy again! Fine, but you've got to work with me!
What do you mean by that?
I remember the elaborate workmanship of his sword... it's a clue to the murders

It's the same sword Saitou has!
A clue? How is that?
That's what I want to know too and there's no other way but to find him myself! And Sanji do you have any idea where to find him?
WHAT?!
But.. why...?
What's wrong?
Hm...
SHK *shrug*

Shady Footsteps

part 2

I'm not turning back, so wish me luck
Tell the others if something happens

I'm... I'm going back

He's been waiting for me!
But what could a guy like that have to do with Kikuchiyo .?
But what if he knows what I've been searching for?
..He's the killer?

Well ain't this convinient - you're stuck right in the middle
!!!
First, why don't you take off that hood?

WHAT?!
Don't you think there is someone who would be sad if we were to cross swords?
Ah...
KA-N!

SFX: "Pant pant"
WATCH OUT!!
SFX: "-Hash"

I'll reclaim what is mine This should be enough for you
That was no cruel

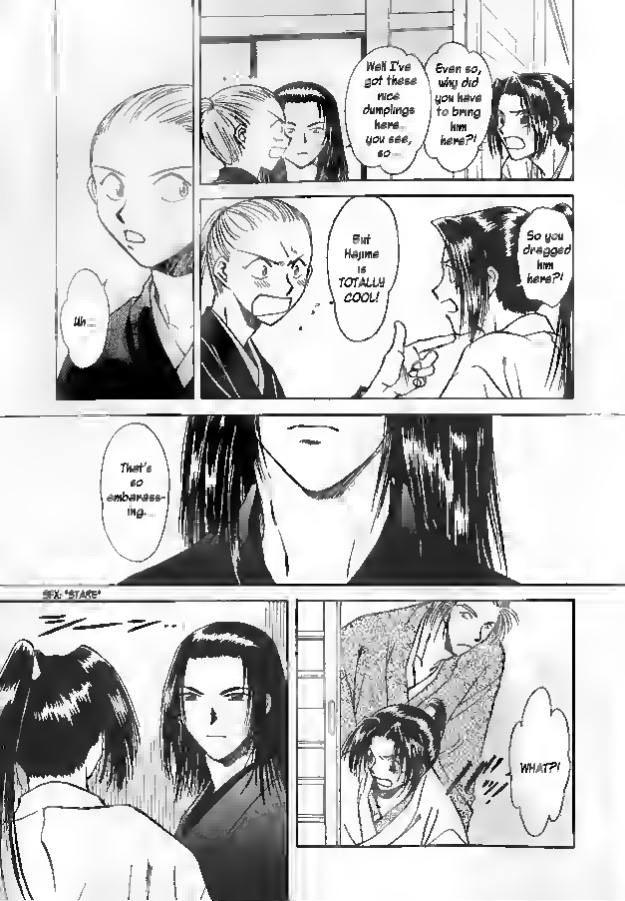
This sword – Kochoumaru Kaga the Butterfly Shadow – was originally bestowed upon me
This man was so obsessed by the sword that he tried to steal it, so we secretly made a copy The Kochoumaru was delivered to me
How I've longed to wield this blade...
Shadow?
You don't look like the kind of person who can appreciate such things
A shadow should remain in the darkness

Don't get the wrong idea, but I think I'll take my leave now...
MINOMURA!!
KUADA!!
What are you saying...!
WAIT!!
You idiot! Let him go!
But...
SHUT UP!!

SFX: "Footsteps"
It's been a week
Wow, you're really strong... what school did you learn at?
And that's MY fault?!
Both the person attacking Jojo and the murderer seem to have disappeared. My one lead is gone too

SFX. "stare"
SFX. "clash"

SFX: "collapse"
ガターン
Toudou-kun?
Toudou-kun?! What's this?!
Um, well we unexpectedly ran into eachother
And he was really strong, so I wanted to see him again...


Well I've got these nice dumplings here, you see, so...
Even so, why did you have to bring him here?!
So you dragged him here?!
But Hajime is TOTALLY COOL!
Uh...
That's so embarassing...
SFX: "STARE"
WHAT?!

HEY! I heard that!!
You never change...
He will come to share this one... with those of Shinkan Dojo
No I'm not!!
You're just mad cause you got leftover dumplings
Sanosuke Hajime...

You leave me no choice
Come now, you're being unreasonable. What did you think you would accomplish by taking this from me?
Who knows?
シャ!!

(-SFX "big impact"
SFX "-hssh"
SFX "hitting the floor"

Your grip is weak because of it
Your left arm is injured
I suppose I was lucky
Are you really hurt?
OW! Let go of me!
SFX: *Pant pant*
Tosh!
Wait!!
Well then, excuse me

Sanosuke Sagara
Sagara Sanosuke
Sagara Sanosuke
Sagara Sanosuke

That's...
Don't you think there is someone who would be sad if we were to cross swords?
Where is he?!
Tosin!
I'll take care of it later!

Calm down! I know you're embarassed, but don't make such a fuss!
I AM NOT!
He's getting away because you just had to stop me, Isami!
Could he be...?
That's not all it was
Okita "Soujirou" was your childhood name wasn't it? Is he someone you knew?
No IF he was I don't remember him
Don't you recall seeing anyone like him recently?
Like that "Kikuchiyo"! You say his name sometimes... who is he?!
He's...
I think you DO remember!!

That guy...
Stop it! Okita has his own reasons!
I don't know this Saitou-kun!!
Don't say that!!
Let me go!
Come on! Let's get you to Doctor Ryoujun
I think it's YOU who has the soft spot For him!
Stop being so soft on him!
Ohhh!